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The History Of Tom Jones, A Foundling

In Four Volumes

Fielding, Henry

London, 1750

Chap. I. A Farewel to the Reader.

urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-893

THE
HISTORY
OF A
FOUNDLING.

BOOK XVIII.

Containing about Six Days.

CHAP. I.

A Farewel to the Reader.

WE are now, Reader, arrived at the last Stage of our long Journey. As we have therefore travelled together through so many Pages, let us behave to one another like Fellow-Travellers in a Stage-Coach, who have passed several Days in the Company of each other; and who, notwithstanding any Bickerings, or little Animosities which may have occurred on the Road, generally make all up at last, and amount, for the last Time, into their Vehicle

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with Chearfulness and Good-Humour; since after this one Stage, it may possibly happen to us, as it commonly happens to them, never to meet more.

As I have here taken up this Simile, give me Leave to carry it a little farther. I intend then in this last Book to imitate the good Company I have mentioned in their last Journey. Now it is well known, that all Jokes and Raillery are at this Time laid aside; whatever Characters any of the Passengers have for the Jest-fake personated on the Road, are now thrown off, and the Conversation is usually plain and serious.

In the same Manner, if I have now and then, in the Course of this Work, indulged any Pleasantry for thy Entertainment, I shall here lay it down. The Variety of Matter, indeed, which I shall be obliged to cram into this Book, will afford no Room for any of those ludicrous Observations which I have elsewhere made, and which may sometimes, perhaps, have prevented thee from taking a Nap when it was beginning to steal upon thee. In this last Book thou wilt find nothing (or at most very little) of that Nature. All will be plain Narrative only; and, indeed, when thou hast perused the many great Events which this Book will produce, thou wilt think the Number of Pages contained in it, scarce sufficient to tell the Story.

And now, my Friend, I take this Opportunity (as I shall have no other) of heartily wishing thee well. If I have been an entertaining Companion to thee, I promise thee it is what I have desired. If in any Thing I have offended, it was really without any Intention. Some Things perhaps here said may have hit thee or thy Friends; but I do
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